

The language of the Xinca people of SE Guatemala is today known to only a handful of people. It is a sad thought that by the year 2000 no one will be left who can speak it. The research of which the results are presented in this book was undertaken so that at least a partial record of this language should remain after the death of its last speakers.

Though perhaps of less interest historically, Xinca is by far better documented than Etruscan or Gaulish. More to the point from a regional point of view, Xinca is documented in an extensive and accurate way, which Tapachultec, Chicomucelte, and Lenca were not, to our loss. All Xincas now can speak Spanish, and the few remaining Xinca-speakers speak Spanish almost exclusively.

The partial record we provide here is by no means paltry. Though our main informants by the time we interviewed them had few or no occasions anymore [when it was necessary for them] to ^[usually] speak Xinca, they were competent ^[almost] speakers who were always sure about the right way to say something and who ^[generally] agreed with one another.

Basically, there are two ways in which ^{detailed} knowledge about Xinca is valuable to other people. First, it helps us to piece together the mosaic of linguistic and cultural history in Southern Mesoamerica. Second, it provides yet another case of a real linguistic system, which is not without its points of interest.

To the children and grandchildren of the last speakers of Xinca, this material may also be of interest. Unless some successor of ours within the next few years before AD 2000 devotes more time and imagination to the study of Xinca than we have been able to, the material presented here is all the descendants of the Xincas will have of their ancestral language.

Though those Xincas ^{now} under 40 who no longer know Xinca have a certain responsibility for having abandoned their language, yet it was not they alone who brought about its demise. Native speakers of Spanish have always brought pressure on Indians to give up their languages in favor of Spanish, and ~~the~~ it was the parents of the ~~current~~ ^{last generation} of competent Xinca speakers who were the group who tried to bring about the last stage in shift to Spanish by refusing to speak Xinca to their children. The last speakers of Xinca no longer use Xinca not from lack of interest - the fact that they know Xinca bespeaks a lively interest in the matter, at least in their youth - but from lack of need and opportunity.

Xinca is known in at least four significantly distinct forms which we may view as strongly differentiated dialects or weakly differentiated languages. For our purposes, since most of what we know about Xinca is found in this book, it is useful to focus on its unity rather than its diversity. In terms of our familiarity with Mayan and Indo-European languages, the four kinds of Xinca are about as different as the Norse languages: Swedish, Norwegian, Icelandic, ^{Faroese} Gutnish, Danish, or Quichéan proper: Quiché, Sipacapa, Sacapultec, Tzutujil, Cakchiquel

For what it is worth, glottochronological figures for all ^(Xinca, Norse, Quichéan) three cases, range between 1000 and 1200 years of diversification.

The four known-to-be-distinct types of Xinca are those of

Guazacapán
Chiquimulilla
Tumaytepeque
and Yupilteque

In each of the ^{our} towns, informants we are able to think of about ten people who could speak the language, all over sixty. During this whole century probably less than 500 people have been able to speak Xinca.

Today Xinca is spoken in the first three towns only. The full list of known Xinca towns is given later. There is a handful of words each from two or three of them, but they seem essentially identical with one or another of the known forms listed above.

the Spanish under

The Xincas were subdued by ^A Pedro de Alvarado in 152..., but apart from a brief description

^{Xincas'} of the war practices and a list of Xinca towns

(included in Recordación Florida) little else is known

[quote whole section of Rec. Flor. < Alvarado]

of aboriginal Xincas. From 177... Cortés y Larraz

^{data for} provides a current list of Xinca towns, but little

else. Several other town lists are found through

the Colonial period.

Baptismal records tell us little of names the Xincas bore.

There is one significant document on Xinca from the Colonial period. It is — Maldonado's Arte y Vocabulario en Lengua Szinca. It represents the dialect of Guazacapán. Though it nowhere says so, the language is essentially identical to that of 20th c Guazacapán, and Guazacapán was the capital ^{town} city of the Xinca political unit.

In the (19th and) 20th centuries, the ethnography and archeology of the Xinca area has ~~been~~ been

neglected, and now it is ^{almost} too late for the former, though the Xincas still have a sense of being Indians + may have preserved something of their distinctive aboriginal culture patterns. Like most parts of Meso America, particularly

the more fertile areas, there are probably minor + major archeological sites at an average of one ~~kilom~~ per kilometer in all directions.

There is great potential here which has not been tapped.

Linguistic work is limited to the 20th c, and except

for the present book is either inaccurate or fragmentary or both. The ^{material} work here presented, though not ^{exhaustive} complete of every last point conceivable, ~~includes everything ever collected by anyone before and a great deal~~ Besides ^{beside} presenting a descriptive and comparative account of

Xinca, we have attempted a reconstruction of

certain aspects of Xinca cultural history via

linguistic diffusion phenomena between Xinca + other

lgs. + ~~by~~ via place-name studies. We would be able

data to integrate, but such is lacking

The Xinca area being one of the most
fertile in Guatemala (though the sea coast itself is
unhealthy) it has been subject to ~~the heaviest~~
extremely heavy pressures both economic & cultural,
and the demise of Xinca language & culture
is its ^{natural} consequence. One ^{also} gets a cloudy impression
(hard to verify in the absence of ethnographic & ^{ethno}historical data)
~~also~~ that the Xincas were culturally different
and possibly less advanced technologically than the
Mayans. If true, this may partly account for their
lower degree of cultural tenacity when compared with
Mayans: (some Mayan groups have gone under too;
Chicomuceltec and Apay (Cholti?) for example.)

Suggestions for Further Research

- ① Archeological survey and excavation of selected sites.
- ② Salvage ethnography
- ③ Ethnohistory
- ④ Specialized linguistic work to be done before 1990
 - (a) texts
 - (b)
- ⑤ Check out Mataguescuintla
- ⑥ Scraps ~~from~~ from ex-Xinca towns
 - Yupe Jalapa
 - Taxisco
 - Pasaco
 - Moyuta

Salvage Linguistics

Xinca

S.L. is a term applied to the kind of linguistic ~~was~~ research we have done with the last speakers of linguistics. It means working on a language at the last possible moment in its existence while it is still ~~remembered by some~~ controlled competently by some speakers. It is difficult work because the informants are usually old, frequently toothless, tiring easily, ^{often half-deaf} and not always able to understand that questions should be answered ~~correctly~~ by providing exact equivalents to the ~~stimulus questions~~ contact-language gloss. Add to this the fact that in any community there will be a certain % of speakers who will have nothing to do with outsiders asking questions; if there are 10 speakers and five will not speak to you, the situation can appear desperate.

We feel that since so many languages are entering into a moribund state it ~~is~~ should be felt as a duty by all serious field linguists to work on at least one such language. We recommend such work, however, not for graduate students aiming at a dissertation, but ~~at~~ for ~~at the~~ persons to whom the completion and the completeness of the job is not urgent or crucial.

A field linguist should cut his teeth on a language that is in ^{full} bloom, or at least holding its own.

Noted
J. S. S.
1958

Xinca field work
by Campbell & Kaufman

various informants	1971	Guazacapán ^{Cipriano, Lucio}	Antigua: Casa Mercedes	(TK, LC)
	1972	Chiquimulilla ^{Vicente} Guazacapán	Guaz. (LC)	
	1973	Jumay ^{Clemente, Santos, Guillermo}	Antigua: Bankhouse 4 ^a Ave S No 2	(TK, LC)
	1974	Jumay ^{Santos, Guillermo}	Antigua: Rancho Nimajay	(TK, LC)
	1975	Guazacapán	Antigua: Tam Larsen's house	(TK)
	1978	Guazacapán	Antigua: Bob's House 4 ^a Ave S No 4	TK
		Chiquimulilla		

Clive's house

Aug 73 Tummy 3 guys

Nimajay

Summer 74 Tummy 2 guys

The orig. distribution of Xinca

the present-day-day

- 1) Xinca lg. has names for places where Xinca has been spoken in the last 100 yrs.

This includes Mataguescuintla and Paraco

- 2) 19th^c & earlier scholars report Xinca

in Alzatate and Jalapa. Paraco is said to be "Populuca", but this must be = Xinca.

- 3) ^{Sp.} Place-names of obvious or apparent Xinca origin are found in areas consistently attributed to other lgs in ethnohistorical sources or where other lgs are now spoken. Since Indians have always translated place names into their own lgs, the ^{Xinca-origin} ^{Sp.} place names must have been gotten vivâ voce from Xinca-speaking Indians who may be assumed to have formed the primary portion of the population, whatever the 20th situation ^{maybe} is, or the ethnohistorical sources might ^{suggests} ~~claim~~. The claim of Mataguescuintla & Juncos for Chortí is assumed to be an ^{error}.

Lehmann (II) p 730

Sapper gives for Xinca 1897

Chiquimulilla

Sumatepeque

Atlatate

Jalapa

Yupiltepeque

Calderón 1891-92 gives for Xinca

Yipe = Yupiltepeque 800 Jalapa 3500

Chiquimulilla 1000

Tezuaco 600 [= Tecuaco]

Nancinta 500

Zinacantan 800

Yamaytepeque 300 [= Tumattepeque]

Xinca & Chorti
Ipala

Xinca and Nahua

Sanarate

Anshagua

El Sugumay

Sansare

Xinca and Poconam

Ayampuc (Cak)

Akate

Sansirisay

[Matagrescuintla]

Sampaguisay

Volcan Limay

Sanyuyo

[Talapa]

Sansur

Sanguayabá

Tatasirire

used by linguists, anthropologists, & ^{historians} to refer to

Xinca is the name ^{of} a small group of ^{still} languages ^{spoken} spoken by a few individuals of advanced age in each of 3 towns in SE Guatemala - Guazacapán, Chiquimulilla, and Thumaytepeque.

The language has ^{not} been heard much in public since about 1930.

There exists a small amount of ^{now-extinct} poorly-recorded material ^{from} ^{from} about 1890 ^{from} a fourth Xinca language, that of Yupiltepeque. Xinca of Guazacapán was ^{also} documented ^{by} around 1770 in a rather well recorded grammar and vocabulary by Juan Maldonado Matos. The ^{known} 4 Xinca languages are about as different one from another as Quiché, Cakchiquel, and Tzutujil of the Mayan family, that is, about 1000 years.

The surviving Xinca speakers, ^{as well as local} ^{as well as} ^{local} refer to their languages by the term Pipil, a term no doubt introduced by ~~local~~ ^{local} Ladinos who confused Xinca with the Nahuatl Pipil spoken both to the East in El Salvador and to the West around Escuintla. Names used in the region up to 1900 include Xigua, Xingua, ~~Xinca~~, Xuca-Populuca, and Populuca. The origin of the term Xinca and its variants is unknown. ~~It seems to derive~~ ^{It seems to derive} does not seem to derive from any known word of Xinca origin. Populuca is a term of Nahuatl origin meaning roughly 'babbler' (i.e. barbarian).

^{attested} The distribution of Xinca ~~at~~ at the time of the Conquest and for 250 years ^{later} was much greater than at present, and place-name evidence suggests that it was in fact ^{and 19th century} greater ~~than~~ than the explicit references in colonial ^{AD} sources would indicate. The ~~distribution~~ distribution of Xinca in ^{AD} 1400 probably covered ~~all of~~ ^{all of} SE most of SE Guatemala east of the Suchatoya River and south of the Motagua River, ~~there~~ thus more than half of the area customarily assigned to

Pocomam, though Pocomam probably coexisted with Xinka in
all the ^{Xinka} areas usually attributed to the former.